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Approaching an Alien

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V.V. Bibikhin in his 2001 paper "Terrible Things" writes that in the XX century "because of the total erasure of religious worldview terrible things had acquired much of what used to be attributed to the evil spirits".¹ We may as well agree and add: mass culture speaks today of the terrible things, shows them, takes an interest in them, comes into contact with them and flirts with them. Much of what is now printed, published and produced as a film should not be imposed on the wide screen, come to readers or other audience. But the different thing happens too, when seemingly lightweight or commercial work in its essence turns to be carrying the same "transcendent" and religious meaning, which is described by V.V. Bibikhin.

The religious matters are discussed by the words and language of secular, popular and seemingly quite distant from religion things. This happens without the author's awareness, on the grounds of that the world is all arranged according to some stable relations and rules. The horrible thing is still horrible despite the fact so much is said about it and that now it is dressed in a modern and ironic coat of many colors. Alien, another, foreign substance do not cease to be even with the background of tolerance, multiculturalism and liberal all-understanding.

In this paper we made an attempt to treat a stranger as having no correlation with our world, the Alien as absolutely and completely confronting the human.

Keywords: alien, alienation, Otherwise, terrible, epic movie, undestanding, salvation, Lieutenant Ripley.

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M. Mamardashvili in his paper "Consciousness and Civilization"² cited a poem by the German poet Gottfried Benn "The whole" (Das Ganze). "Look at you, how gross and disgusting you are! Do you really think you actually matter and are any better than any other creature in the world? You are nasty, sick and then you die". M.K. Mamardashvili uses this work by G. Benn to demonstrate graphically

the idea of dissociation of the human. The poem speaks of apprehending some goal, and also about that in the process of achieving this goal various parts and elements of human life are not consistent with each other. "One part was drunk, one part – in tears", "One looked sternly at you, the other was soft", "One saw what you built, another – only what you destroyed", the citations are given as they are quoted by Mamardashvili. But in the end, it is expected that the goal will

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be achieved, which means that “a faith will be ever clear”. And the whole was born at last. However, it turned out to be something strange and monstrous. What appeared and what “should be” looks like “a bare headed skunk in a pool of blood//And on its eyelash there is a pattern of tears”.

The result of expectations is not clear either to understand them or to give them a distinct emotional evaluation. It is something vague and strange in the sense that this should not exist. This is not what was expected and intended as a goal. Neither for the person on behalf of whom the poem is written, nor for the reader, a witness of the incident. The strain of the poem is created by an unpredictable and illogical ending. That is what happened in the end is beyond our understanding, it is unpleasant, disgust, it is crying and stares as if it was a stone.

It's amazing how this something that is described in a poem by G. Benn resembles visually the Alien from the famous series of science fiction films about Aliens. We recall of the fact that there are four of these films³. Let us try to use this story about the fantastic Alien for understanding the phenomenon of the strange, the alien on the whole. G. Benn's poem “Das Ganze” as well as the film “Alien” are pushing us to the conclusion that the unity and integrity of people and strangers should not be expected.

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Let us remember the history of “Alien.”

In the first film that was shot by Ridley Scott and shown at the cinemas in 1979, people saw the creature of so-called xenomorph. It exists in two forms: in the form of small having a tail “spiders” and in the form of large dental creatures like dragons. “Spiders” which are hatched from eggs live in man's body and then are born in it. They naturally destroy body when go out of it. Monsters quickly grow and begin to kill all members of

the small crew. They are extraordinarily rapid, aggressive, and literally indestructible. A film is completed by death of all crew and escape of Lieutenant Helen Ripley in a space capsule with a red cat into the bargain.

The second part of the film “Alien”, shot by James Cameron, shows an attempt to destroy aliens on a planet, where they exist. The attempt was unsuccessful. Ripley survives again and rescues Rebecca-Newt. They with an injured corporal and a crippled robot try to fly away a little farther. In the second part we can see an alien's female – oviposit out of which “spiders” hatch, searching for the method of penetration in a human. The plot of appearance of large alien individuals looks like tangled. The alien's appearance requires a man as a mediator.

The third “Alien” was shot by David Fincher, director of such famous in the nearby future films as “Seven” and “The Game”. The action of the third film takes place in a community of prisoners expecting near doomsday. In this film the Alien is called a dragon. He destroys almost all community of former criminals. The last embryo of the Alien is liquidated by the well-coordinated work of unarmed prisoners and at the cost of Ripley's sacrificial death.

The fourth part of “Alien” was shot by the French director Jean Genet in 1997. This film is interesting because of the attempt to show the interpenetration of a man and a xenomorph. Ripley is raised from the dead artificially, the Alien is grown in a laboratory. After all, the Alien has obvious anthropomorphous features and feels drawn to Ripley. Nevertheless, Ripley beats the Alien in this part of film.

We will try to single out some substantial qualities and characteristics of the Alien, to link them to form a single image and after doing that we will try to understand, what type of relationship is possible between a man (that in all parts of film is embodied by Ripley) and the Alien.

Firstly, we fix the incomprehension about who is before us. At the first meeting with the Alien we can't understand for a long time why he does stick to the face of a man, for what purpose? This incomprehension of reasons and sense of actions makes the Alien really frightful, because there is a fear of unclear actions. When the first man dies in the process of "hatching" embryo from him, it seems that there is a possibility to catch easily and quickly destroy this "small freak". Originally it is small like a bird. Such attitude toward the Alien, non-clarified, but having simultaneously some underestimation of danger, proceeds during all the film, up to the end of the fourth part. Armed to the teeth Marines, prison governor, geneticists and so on don't believe Ripley and laugh at her. Every time Ripley confidently talks that it is impossible to beat the Alien, domesticate it or to save for experiments. It is possible only to destroy it by all means: at the cost of shipwreck, loss of cargo, cost of human life. There is an attempt to replace the Alien with the Other, Stranger with "some reservations". The Other exists in this obtrusiveness of misunderstanding by the people of that nature which Ripley talks about. It is possible somehow to agree with the Other, understand it, enter with it into a dialogue, agreement or association, form Unit with it. Another can be understood, people can be surprised at it. "The Alien with reservations" is not such a stranger and maybe will become Our.

The Alien is out of agreement and understanding, it is out of logic and some rationality. In this sense the fantastic environment of all "Aliens" is justified by an aim to underline nature of alien.

Reserved space of compartments of ships, cabins, laboratories, space bases brings nearer the Alien to a man. They face each other. As it is straightly shown in one of episodes of the fourth part, when a doctor, delighted by the beauty of the Alien, intermingles with it (more precisely –

with her, because this one is female) through the glass. But physical, direct approximation gives nothing. Every film is begun with utopia and supposition, that alien can be understood and used in the human aims. And each time it appears impossible. We remind that at the beginning of the first part of film *Ripley* didn't want to put into the side of the ship the first infected man. That, who did it, appeared to be an android, carrying out the order of the so-called "Mother" – host side computer of the ship. The computer personifies exactness, order, quickness and rightness of choice of decisions and in this sense it expresses some objective impartial knowledge, including that about such object as the Alien.

In 1968 Stanley Kubrick in the film "A Space Odyssey" captures the conflict between humans and computers which are given much authority. In "A Space Odyssey" electronic brain confronts a man and assumes the role of decision-maker at the cost of the humans' life. This confrontation confuses in "Alien". Mother-computer instructs to keep the Alien on assumption of the crew's death and thus a human begins to oppose both technology and aggressive Alien. The robot-android Ash, the one who let the first infected in the humans' ship, supports Mother-computer's instruction. A dual pair "human-technology" is transformed into a ternary structure "human-technology-alien". It's clear that the human in this confrontation is in difficult straits because he deals with classic alienation in the form of technology and the alienation of the new type. This new alienation cannot be understood purely in Marxist or civilized way as initially the Alien is not a product of mankind; it's not made by human hands. The Alien shows up and then gets into a human. The fact that the Alien uses the human body for the birth of a monster-dragon is the attitude of external parasite which seizes the human body.

Describing alienated labor, Marx emphasizes that it is connected with objectification and development of the object. "Objectification acts as loss of the object and the enslavement by the object, the development of the object – as alienation"³⁴. If the Alien is perceived strictly on the basis of K. Marx's ideas about alienation then the human would have to work in its creation and then find out during the process of its development that the created things became the Alien. And the human in all four parts of the film is trying to "master" the Alien without any result. This fact indicates the human's attempt to fit into the Marx's logic of human vs. alien opposition. After all, the Alien resembles a natural phenomenon, natural disaster, fire or water coming out of hand.

If we compare the behavior of the Alien in this movie with the behavior of various kinds of "miscreant" who are aggressive also towards people, whether it be cyborgs, mutants, mad animals, maniacs, snakes, zombies, undead, etc., the Alien's specific character will be exactly far away from the human. The Alien from "Alien" initially is not associated with the human; it didn't come deliberately to the Earth for sources of energy or for other specific reasons as the monster-cockroach from the movie "Men in Black". The Alien wasn't sent from the future to perform special tasks as in the second part of "Terminator". The Alien is not a maniac who eats human fear; it is neither a vampire who needs blood, nor a werewolf who is half a human itself. The Alien is alien to the human totally though it uses the human as an incubator for its own reproduction. Fundamentally, the Alien could use any other body for its own purposes, if this opportunity was given to. This assumption is supported by the episode of the third part when a growing individual of the Alien lodged in a cow carcass for some time. This example highlights the fundamental difference between the Alien and the human. If in the first two parts it seems

that the Alien cannot live and be born without human, the ability to exist in the body of animal emphasizes that the Alien does not need a human at all.

What gives us such an intensified contrast between the human and the Alien? The opposition is of such a degree that the Alien even does not fall in the category of alienated object or subject. The alienation exactly gives the material to the strongest emotions and heart-rending conflicts of various kinds: between the individual and society, an adult and a child, society and ideology. Such conflicts are fertile material for history of cinema and art on the whole.

In one of the last scenes of the movie "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" (directed by Milos Forman, the film was released in 1975) Billy after a romantic night with a girl suddenly starts to beg the nurse Fletcher that she would not tell his mother about this "incident". McMurphy is horrified watching this scene, knowing that Fletcher actually pushes the guy to commit suicide. That's why McMurphy does not run away as he has planned and tries to strangle Fletcher. The enormity of Billy's alienation looks even worse than horrible monster-nurse. He is in the hospital ward willfully and thus he voluntarily accepts mockery and violence there. Alien in Billy consist in his illness which makes him a weak-willed subject at a critical moment. But this "alien" is perfectly estimated by Fletcher and included in the register of specific mental illness. For hospital it is not "alien", not terrible, not dangerous and can be treated. It is natural. It can be easily manipulated at the right moment as they cynically do this in the case with Billy.

Again, the Alien in "Alien" is not alienated from the human because there is no connection between the Alien and the human. It is not the object for manipulation, control; fundamentally it is not clear, whether the Alien can think. On the one hand, it behaves as a mad insect driven

by instincts. But its cunning and refined behavior in hide-and-seek reaches such a degree that it seems that the Alien is reasonable. It appears in the most unexpected places, it always is in time to go to a ship or space shuttle at the very last second. Finally, it can drive mechanisms (e.g. lift) as it was in the second part of the movie. So the Alien is outside the alienation, beyond its limits. This fact underlines the impossibility of contact and interaction between the Alien and the human. The contact is possible only in one way – in the form of destruction and non-contact.

* * *

This kind of radical attitude to the “Alien” is not obvious and we admit its inconsistency. One can easily imagine a stranger who came to our home, this kind of a stranger, foreigner, wanderer, to which the characters of Platonic dialogues talk. In this case, this stranger will be different from us; he will be so different being unlike us. Therefore this stranger will help to build our own identity, as by determining the alien we will better define our own, close to us.

For example, a doctor of philology N.V. Pestova in her work “The lyrics of German Expressionism: profiles of strangeness”⁵ by using vast poetic material specifies the phenomena of “strangeness” and “foreign”. Alien phenomenon appears as paired with “of the same kin”, which is not a stranger, but a member of the mandatory dual pair my/another. If we use only a few epithets and features which uses N. V. Pestova to characterize “another” and which she finds in the poetry of German Expressionism, the stranger appears to us with the following countenances: outcast, misfit, madman, cursed, outsider, stranger, foreigner. The alien will be accompanied by: emptiness, nostalgia, mystery, strangeness, fairy-tale, etc. In fact, we can see the whole set of adjectives, characteristics, words and concepts that were used by German Expressionists to describe the

world around us. This world is crumbling, scary, aggressive, socially alienated from the people. World of war, disease, loneliness in the city, the suffering people, the loss of intimacy, seeking God, sick children, the elderly sufferers and so on. In other words, such a characteristic of strangeness and alien reveals a certain aspect of being alienated.

N.V. Pestova devotes few chapters to the various parts of alienation: “Alienation and estrangement in the aesthetic discourse at the turn of the century”⁶, “Alienation and estrangement in the sociological discourse of the beginning of the century”⁷, “The topological aspect of strangeness. The origins of global alienation of modern man”⁸. Alienation as a social phenomenon, as a sociological phenomenon, a symptom of the crisis era is accepted by the author as the methodological basis for seeking in the lyrics of German Expressionism these “profiles”, modes, the specification of the alienation. N.V. Pestova refers to the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche, the sociology of Georg Simmel in order to fix the presence of the idea of alienation, and, then, to see the diversity of the supporting evidence in poetry and literature. But in her work we can not find, alas, a detailed characterization of the alienation. Alienation is meant more as a crisis in general, as some nihilistic, destructive process that influenced the artistic culture on the whole, and in the case of German Expressionism led to a mass of “foreign” and “alien” images. Characteristic, for example, is such of the author’s arguments: “the experience of strangeness in the city, which is automatically alienate every subject and every individual, can be traced to the earliest publications of expressionist decade to publications in exile after the party of National Socialists came to power”⁹. The city as a social cesspool, as a scene of mob and sin, as a stone bag, really nourishes literature with appearance of strange, painful images. And in the poetry of

expressionism the connection between the city and the strangeness is manifested as sharp and intense. But that does not automatically mean that all life in the city leads to alienation and, therefore, the appearance of the Alien in it. City life without any sense of alienation was described by Russian writers Pushkin, Gogol, and Bloc. But even the city of expressionists does not produce the alien by its own presence only. Between the city and alienation in the city and the appearance of a stranger are some events in chain, these are intermediate logical units. If they are not fixed, the alien and strangeness lack their origin. Alienation as a process, in our view, does not generate “foreign” mechanically, as in the very process of alienation the alien is already present. And as it was demonstrated by the movie “Alien”, someone else is always there. It first appears, and then, as it turns out, is perceived as aggressive, angry, mad, etc., i.e. – aloof.

Here is another example from N.V. Pestova. She commented “Digression on outsiders” by Georg Simmel as: “In this small digression there appeared two points which are sociologically extremely important and impressed by expressionistic lyrics. A stranger, despite his outsider status, is still an organic member of the group, in the life which he can not but take part because of the inevitable stay within the dynamic synthesis of *close – far*. Even suffering from his strangeness and experiencing it as a ‘transcendental homelessness’, a stranger draws his strength in it and maximizes its use”¹⁰.

But in this case it appears that a stranger, foreign, alien are losing their specific strangeness. They are disposed of only that extent that they are close to their own close. The author understands alienation in the anthropological and sociological sense, which does not allow the stranger to become really strange and binds him all the time to something being not really strange. Hence, we have the initial ambivalence of stingers, leading

to their inevitable romanticizing. It turns out that the alien can be “positively coloured”.

In the third part of the “Alien” one of the psychopathic prisoners, former serial killer, the man who called the Alien “a dragon”, releases this dragon of the stone trap. Upon killing his friend this unfortunate person asks the dragon “what he should do”. He is ready to fulfill the commandments of the new master, being fascinated (as well as some of the other characters in the movie) by the Alien’s terrible beauty. He hopes for a particular appreciation from Alien. But of course, that won’t follow. What follows is the usual state of things: the Alien kills his liberator, emphasizing the impossibility of any agreement between him and the man.

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The articles, written by Yu. S. Stepanov about “our” and “alien”, published in the Dictionary of Russian culture¹¹, realise the aspect of consideration “alien” as paired with “our”. This attitude to other people in this relation is moving closer to the above approach, proposed by N.V. Pestova.

Yu. S. Stepanov wrote: “This opposition in various forms permeates the entire culture and is one of the main concepts of any collective, public, folk, national attitudes. Including, of course, Russian national culture. Depending on the massiveness of the object which is taken into consideration, we find somewhat special, but always a clear distinction between “our” and “alien”. It is so definite as it is known in our household by the boys of one and the same entrance, one and the same house, one and the same yard with a few houses. This loyalty is expressed in the devoted attitude to “our” and in fights with “aliens” ... The principle of “our” – “aliens” dissects the families, us and our neighbours, forms kins and clans in more archaic societies, religious sects, ... etc”¹².

This kind of approach to the “Alien” through “Aliens” is certainly legitimate and interesting. The author initially fixes in this dictionary article the sociologism of his point of view, highlighting others on the “terms of the collective”, in other words – in terms of the magnitude of the subject. In addition, a pair of Our/Aliens is examined as one, holistic concept of the Russian culture. In the first place in this pair stands Our, which naturally puts mark on this article (OUR and ALIENS) in particular, and on all the work done in the Dictionary.

However, this approach implies that not only someone else will always be correlated with our, but he does risks cease to be a stranger. Moving away from the entrance to another entrance, from city to city, we are changing the status of others for our. Being initially villagers, we eventually become citizens, and the city becomes our own. Although Yu. S. Stepanov pays a lot of space in this article to the concept of ethnicity expressed by L.N. Gumilev, thus emphasizing that the opposition of “us” and “them” is not in the field of the mind and consciousness, and deeper in the ethnic group, yet, even in this respect to “other” the author supposes that people’s active interaction with alien makes it perceived as our. So, for example, K.N. Leontiev believed that due to the Turkish influence Bulgarian ethnic group and Bulgarian Orthodox believers have given the world so many ascetics. But the opposite approach was chosen by Strakhov. Defending N.Ya. Danilevsky he wrote that for the transfer of foreign cultural values to the native soil we should first of all develop our language and culture.

The fact that “our” and “alien” are interdependent and connected is obvious, but our position is to consider and study the Alien separately, apart from Our. Yu. S. Stepanov gives an indirect indication of the fact that the “alien” exceeds the limits of what is based near, with “our”. He writes regarding the etymology of the

word “alien” (in Russian – чужое): “There is no doubt, however, that in the Russian culture the meaning of the word (or the words¹³) comes close to the concept of “Miracle” (Чудо – in Russian), as to the phenomenon of something being inexplicable by natural order of things, and in some ways and in some word usages both concepts are imposed directly on top of each other (as contaminants). These cases include in particular adjective miraculous (in Russian – чудной¹⁴), – this form is undoubtedly derived from the root “miracle”, this word in the Russian language almost coincides with the meaning of *another, other, foreign, strange, unusual*, and the verb *to alienate* (чужа́ться), which is undoubtedly in its form derived from the word *alien* – chuzhii (чужий) and by its meaning “be surprising” coincides entirely with the verb “to be surprised, amazed” (чудомся), derived from the root of miracle (чудо¹⁵).

The author does not draw any conclusions and implications of this kind of etymological relationship between words “alien” and “miracle”. If we use the knowledge of this relationship when watching “Alien”, again we will see the semantic enhancement of Alien’s strangeness. The Alien is so strange to the man that its appearance next to the man, its genetic origin – is a miracle. Fantastic surrounding of “Alien” films is justified by this fact in particular, as mentioned above. To show quite strange Alien the producers needed a fantastic story about a spaceship, abandoned asteroid, angry campaign, brave Ellen Ripley, played by Sigourney Weaver.

Miracle of Alien is not only and not so much in the fantastic stunts and special effects of the film, and not in the tragic situation where people are the victims of evil spiders. And not even in savoring horror of the emergence of a new individual monster – xenomorph. Reduced “message” of eight-hour battle of Lieutenant Ripley is just that simple: The Alien as a miracle is

strange and unnatural (as writes Yu. S. Stepanov). Meeting It is unnatural too, and certainly it is not natural to assume that it is possible to explore the Alien, to curb and tame It. It can and must be fought back, but it is best not to allow it to a human, not to be with It at all.

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At the beginning of this work we marked the difference between the other and the alien and emphasized that the Alien is like the others, can mimic them, but can not be like them. In order to see the difference between the Other and the Alien clearer and do not mix otherness and alienation, let us turn to the work of Emmanuel Levinas "Time and the Other" and consider the Other in more detail.

"Future death, its foreignness does not leave the subject any initiative. Between the present and death, between the Self and otherness as mystery is spread a chasm. We do not insist on the fact that death ceases the being, that it is the end and nothing, but on the fact that the Self in front of its face can absolutely do nothing. Victory over death is not a problem of eternal life. Overcome death, i.e. save with othernessthe attitude, which should remain personal", – writes Emmanuel Levinas¹⁶. We see that the Alien is associated by Emmanuel Levinas with the death, and the Other with death overcoming. Intimate personal relationships such as: parental relationship, married couples, friends ontologize the Self. In this sense, the very existence is an act of doubles, because it is fundamentally ambivalent relationship between the Self and the Other. Only in conjunction with another a person overcomes death. So says Emmanuel Levinas.

We illustrate this provision by the film "Alien".

Indeed, in all four parts of the film Lieutenant Ripley, fleeing from death herself, helps to save

other people. Particularly it is shown in the second part of the film when Ripley returns to the collapsing station to rescue Newt girl. Before that, she vows "honestly" not to leave Newt in any situation and performs the promise at the risk of her life, at the cost of sacrifice. Newt, who lost parents, as a result, calls Ripley mom. If we recall that Ripley herself "lost" ¹⁷her daughter, it turns out that before the face of death, escaping from the Alien, Ripley and Newt found each other as mother and daughter. In the same part of the movie it is shown how Ripley begins to feel sympathy for Hicks, a cute, brave corporal. Hardly noticeable chaste and erotic tension that is established between Ripley and Hicks in jokes, opinions and requests to rid of a painful death in the sticky web of the Alien gives the end of this part of the film an authentic expression and drama. The Other, as we see it here, is completely opposite to the Alien, the Other can support, rescue, sacrifice.

Although Emmanuel Levinas in these lectures ("Time and the Other") sometimes confuses the other and the alien, but it is not a semantic confusion. For example, he writes that the future of the death is that it is completely different/other¹⁸. Or when he calls fatherhood as a relationship the alien, despite the fact that the father is the other¹⁹. In the end, the Other and the Alien are fundamentally divided. The Other is on the side of life, the Alien – on the side of death. If death refers to the other, it happens in case of inevitability, as the absence of life. We should not talk casually and dialectically, that if, say, there was not the Alien, then Ripley would not be a new Newt's mother and she would not have met with Corporal Hicks. For example, Carter Burke, who protects the interests of the campaign in this part of the film, who, in turn, seeks by all means to bring the Alien on the ground. He is dying alone, branded by everybody as a scoundrel and criminal. "The

other of death” did not give him a personality, a friend, someone with whom he would have survived this last moment of his life. Burke is on the same side as the Alien, though he looks like a man. He made this choice to take this side when admitted the possibility that, as if the Alien may be tamed, explored, used in the so-called scientific interest.

Death is inevitable and the Alien really brings the death of Ripley, Newt, Hicks, robot Bishop, the entire crew. But death can come even without Alien xenomorph. It is the law, because death is inevitable by any means, because the man is mortal. “Imminent death is a part of its essence”²⁰, – emphasizes Emmanuel Levinas. In this sense, Emmanuel Levinas consistently pursues a line of Heidegger, who proposed to understand the human being in the world in terms of its being up to the death. But Emmanuel Levinas goes further, specifying death through suffering. It is one thing to meet death bravely, heroically, showing true human authenticity (of existence), and quite another thing – to die helplessly, in pain and torment. Grasp of death is absolute, if heroism is not possible, if the activity of the Self, the subject are kept to a minimum.

Heroes of the “Alien” die differently. Someone dies suddenly and alone and someone – as a charismatic preacher Dylan from the third part of the film in the literal melee confrontation with the Alien, sacrificing his own life. Life and its final moments do not give everybody the meeting with the Other, and in any case, a meeting with the Alien in the form in which it appears in the “Alien” is not compulsory, because death would come even without the Alien, on the grounds of death characteristics.

Summing it up, due to the specific analysis of the suffering done by E. Levinas we reinforce our belief that there the Alien is the Alien and mixing it with the Other is impermissible.

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Let us ask the question: for understanding that someone else is someone else’s do you need to understand and feel as Pestova and Stepanov? And why not to consider the alien in isolation, separately, without the concept and the phenomenon of “our”? We suppose that the alien is evil in its pure form, and we should forbid the alien to approach us in order to avoid inevitable death. This conclusion is drawn from the four films about the Alien.

Really, as stated above, in stories of German Expressionism, in case of another ethnic group, strangers, etc, the alien is connected with danger and risk. Where there is danger and risk, there are close suffering, undesirable aftermath, destruction and chaos – all these things can be called evil.

The Alien is shown, besides his “soft” options, so-called “profiles”, modes, as demonic and satanic. He penetrates into a man, uses a man and kills a man. He spreads fear, panic, chaos. This bond (evil/alien) at the beginning of the research of the alien is the most natural and primary.

The question of the genetic origin of evil is a secret for onlooker of “Alien”. The film doesn’t give answer. For example, the book and movie “The Lord of the Rings” indicate the origin of the ring of power, which was created by Sauron, personification of evil. He enclosed his strength and power in the Ring. And if Sauron is a symbol of evil, the ring, respectively, is the subject of evil, tempting thing. All of his temporary owners experienced the effects of the ring. It is amazing how long the hobbit Bilbo managed to be the owner of the ring without influence on himself. The Ring is frozen in time, “fell asleep,” as noticed one of the experts on the tale of the ring. Can we call the Ring “strange object” in the respect of his owners, in particular, of the hobbits Bilbo and Frodo? Of course, it’s possible, but “the

alien of the Ring” brings less damage for their owners than “the alien of Alien”.

Alien xenomorph does not give time for reflection and thinking. It annihilates everything at once and quickly. This harshness, swiftness emphasizes, that is better not to handle with such a strange thing. Approaching of a human to embryo, from which spider-alien is hatched, brings into action the process of disclosure of embryo and human death. Fast death is inevitable and unavoidable.

There is an episode of chat between crew members in the first part of “Alien”, in which it is clear, that a signal from a planet, where xenomorphs were found out, is a warning signal, and not SOS as it had been decided earlier. It is unknown who gave a signal. The Alien is somewhere, it exist somewhere. It is dangerous, but people do not know about it. And they do not need to know about it, because this knowledge results in the total destruction of anyone who is close to the Alien. In the second part of the film Ripley emotionally proved to the commission of experts that the Alien is dangerous and that she blew up the ship with a valuable load not in vain. In the fourth part of film she repeats her own words with confidence: “You will die”. “Our” in this logic of reasoning becomes unimportant. You may not speak and ask about it. “Our” does exist, it is here, it does not need any identification, you just need to save, secure, preserve it, so strange should never be allowed anywhere near “our”.

The Alien is dangerous. And being dangerous does not mean that it is not “Our”. “Our” can also be dangerous, as dangerous as only the estranged “our” can be, as dangerous as our own illness, our weapons, our mistakes. Lt. Ripley does not want to let to the board of the ship the first infected person, not because she foresees, as the future danger confronts her identity. Not because the first unfortunate victim of the Alien threatens her and the ship perceived

as “our”. Ripley does not know it yet, and then she finds it out empirically. In the meantime, Ripley simply executes the instruction of her level, while robot – android Ash who let the Alien to the ship executes his instructions, with the scale higher than that of Ripley. Instruction, some Ripley’s “natural instinct” of self-preservation, is aimed at security/safety of the ship, whereas “Mother” computer instruction is to explore new destructive forms of life. To onlookers it seems that the robot saves a person, but in fact the robot thinks not about the man, but about the Alien. Ripley, as it seems, sacrifices a human’s life, but she tries to save the crew. She notices crucial danger in the Alien, while Ash notices in the Alien the beauty of destructive power. In both cases the choice is made and the winner is that choice that leads to death, to the penetration of the Alien to the ship and to all subsequent terrible events.

* * *

Keeping in mind the above state of affairs with regard to human and the Alien, their first meeting and its effects, we can make an analogy of films with the first touch of the scourge of Adam and Eve. The analogy of the film with a religious understanding of the origin of evil, allows us to see the evil Alien in its deepest, truest sense.

Once again, let us remember the very beginning of “Alien”. Before the dramatic action, before any talks and events, before the start of everything the audience sees half-naked people waking up. They wake up slowly, under clean bright white light. They are woken up as usual by automatic program that opens transparent, perfectly clean capsules with sleeping people. Before this scene, the camera moves slowly for a few minutes showing the audience the space station design, where everything works flawlessly and perfectly. “Technological Eden” inspires by its own work the sense of reliability and stability, the work which seems impossible to fail. Caring

“Mother” computer controls all operations and processes, allowing what it considers fit and forbidding unacceptable things. The first common meal, though it consists of canned food, impresses by its fertility being even some over the top. This fact is emphasized by smoking (!?) Astronauts, which looks pretty weird. But if they smoke, then, there can be no question about any shortage of clean air. “Mother” takes care of everything. Right there on the table in the midst of people cat Jonesy is sitting and there are two bird toys nearby.

This kind of idyll, abundance, peace underline a virgin, initial state of a man who once fell asleep or dead, but on someone’s wish comes to life again. This is indicated by travelers themselves, they tell a lot of jokes, talk about money. This small talk about that seems inappropriate and even frivolous on the background of cosmic landscapes and majestic ship. They behave like children. They are careless, relaxed, nothing taking seriously and caring friendly towards each other. Among them there are two pretty women, but no particular sympathy towards them is visible so far. In other words, until the Alien appearance “Nostromo” (the name of the ship) is a small paradise island in space. Reliable and quiet.

Idyll violation is caused by two reasons. 1. The Alien invades people’s life. 2. A man helps the Alien to invade into people’s life.

What is the psychological intrigue and emotional core of all parts of the movie? The answer is: those moments and cinematic shots, those pauses and moments of waiting for the birth of a little Alien, when a person is killed and it becomes clear that the evil (the Alien) *immediately comes through man*. Especially in those cases when neither the audience nor the characters in the film do not feel suspicious. It happens as when Eve does not know what will follow after a serpent’s offer: “And he said unto the woman, You shall not surely die ...²¹” And then, almost

immediately, it is clear that the consequences of the fall will affect all descendants of Adam and Eve, as the effects of the Alien penetration to the territory of the Human will lead to certain death of everybody, and all people need to escape at the very moment of it.

In the film this clarity will appear after a while, the first infected person wakes up firstly, then sits around the table and only after that dies. And even then it will not be obvious that the Alien ruins all, because, as noted above, initially it does not look too dangerous. But having made the penetration, the Alien is virtually unbeatable. And Ripley is beginning to understand it before anyone else. That is why it is so important to take the first decision regarding the Alien, namely, do not let it to the ship.

The serpent beguiled²² Eve (human after all) because of its evil nature and because of the presence of human free will. The penetration of the Alien was the result of free human choice (a program for “Mother” was written by men) in respect of the unknown. This selection is similar to the choice of Adam and Eve. “... Adam and Eve freely chose a path that led them away from God and thus deprived them of life. Sentence pronounced on them and given them into the devil’s hands was not an act of tyranny, it must have flown out of their own choice”, – says JI. Meyendorf, commenting on the issue found at G. Palamas²³. The selected evil begins to bear destruction and death, as the sin is transmitted to human nature.

The essence of evil and its source after making a choice become fixed and difficult to determine. It becomes unclear whether evil comes from a serpent or evil is the consequence of the Fall? Why do people begin to die: either because the Alien kills them because of its original bloodlust, or it is the price paid for carelessness?

We will quote a special study of the Orthodox theologian on that evil in his understanding of

the Old Testament and the New Testament, in fact, is a unity. Fr Timothy Butkevich, professor of theology at the University of Kharkov in the end of the XIX century in his full two-volume treatise devoted to the nature and origin of evil, writes: "... it is clear that the universality of sin, or, equivalently, the sinfulness of human nature itself, was recognized by the Savior Himself, but certain is that fact that our Lord Jesus Christ was referring to the original fall, when he said to the Jews: 'Your father is the devil, and the lusts of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar and the father of lies'. (John 8: 44) ... All the Fathers of the Church and almost all the best theologians of the latest ... in the above words of Jesus Christ correctly have seen the exclusive reference to the fact of the original fall, and the fact that the fall of the devil (in this sense they have understood the words 'does not stand in the truth')²⁴. Further, the author quotes the Blessed Theophylact: "When people lie, it is as if they get use of someone else's falsehood"²⁵.

"Someone else's falsehood" is here, in our context, that someone else's body, which a man is forced to bear after the penetration of the Alien in the human body. Falsehood is created by the man himself, and in this sense he is responsible for it, but all the same, when we raise the question of the beginning of evil, at the very beginning of this top will be just it – the Alien. "He was a murderer from the beginning," – we quoted the Gospel of John.

And having won once, it begins to grow rapidly, strive to breed, expand. And as a person in respect of the Alien has a choice, though not great, but still has, then this meeting: a person with the Alien begins to repeat many times. Once again, remember the movie: one having learnt about the Alien, begins to rave and lose heart,

someone runs away and becomes an easy target for the Alien, someone (like synthetics Bishop) is active, someone like Burke is trying to sell an Alien embryo, and some, like Ripley and preacher Dylan, fight to the end.

The Alien, in other words, is to be understood not only as ontological evil in its devastating "horrible" incarnation, in the form of the original evil that touched Adam and Eve²⁶, but also as temptation, as evil potential, waking up after the man touched him. And since this touch occurred at the beginning of the first part, the semantic focus of the film "Alien" as a whole is not in the scenes of shooting, car chases, crashes of massive concrete structures, in the end not in watching a really terrible Alien. The focus is in those scenes, in those dialogues, conversations and episodes in which a decision is made, whether to touch the Alien, to study it, to let It into the place and the home of the person or not.

All the third part of the "Alien" deals with the theme of temptation in the literal sense. Cute Ripley gets into a colony of repeat offenders and is constantly under the threat of violence. Settlers openly talk about her as a "subject", seductive and enticing, telling her about it in person. They fight with each other, struggling with temptation and this tense background, this whipping up the atmosphere, which were artfully created by D. Fincher. This is the visual "lining", which firmly substantiates this whole part. Note that Ripley all the time being in the colony is already infected. It turns out that she directly and immediately fights what is inside her, i.e. herself.

In the prayer "Our Father" we have such words: "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil". So these words are commented in one of the modern Orthodox catechism. "Deliver us from evil" – literally means – "Save us from the devil" ... getting rid of the devil, and thus being saved from all unrighteousness, stupidity, deceit,

evil and wickedness, which lead to destruction and death²⁷.

It is crowning place of prayer "Our Father". St Maximus the Confessor comments it as such: "The temptation is called the law of sin, the first person shown in the existence of God didn't have it, and the "evil" means the devil, who added this law to human nature and by deception convinced the person to direct all the desire of his soul to the unallowed instead of what is permitted, and thus to be tempted to violate the commandments of God, so that he lost his incorruption, freely given to him by God's grace"²⁸.

Maximus the Confessor wrote that the temptation is called "voluntary disposition of the soul" to the carnal passions. As applicable to the selected material it is extremely difficult to define the attitude of being caught by temptation and free choice. The Alien penetration to the ship and after in a person is a voluntary act made on the part of the person. This is the first. The second is the tyranny of the passions, which according to Maximus the Confessor, "randomly invades" in a person because of "his free consent". In this combination of freedom of the person and the randomness of evil/temptation on the part of the Alien there is an unresolved philosophical paradox, which leads to the appearance of the Alien in the world of man.

The way out of this paradox and its resolution is the faith of the person who, according to the prayer "Our Father", must first forgive his neighbor and as a result receive from God a "gift of double grace": the forgiveness of his sins against another man, and the forgiveness of possible future sins.

The prayer "Our Father" says about the temptation right after begging to "forgive our sins", as people shall forgive their debtors. Therefore, the issue of the action of temptation becomes dependent on the request for forgiveness and being forgiven. Here Ripley and all the surrounding people are helpless, because none

of them asks for forgiveness and repents about anything. But all the same.

If we recall how Ripley directly invokes God in the action of final extermination of the Alien in the first part of the film, how she fulfills a promise to save Newt in the second film, how she actively and insistently makes attempts to get in touch with the Alien. These actions we can see as her repentance, effort to correct a mistake that first, significant mistake. Not even bearing in mind how she is killed by jumping into molten lead and thus sacrificing herself. And it happens in the third part, in the community, as it is said "of fundamental Christians".

Maximus the Confessor confirms the idea that the Alien is unnatural, when he emphasizes that evil acts are "contra natural". Nature of the intact human is of logos matter (more accurately, the human inherently has "a logos of nature"²⁹); therefore, the human belongs to being and essence. And the existence of passions "doesn't have the independent being".

Under the true human nature (applicable to the film) we should understand the preservation of the body in the ordinary sense of the word, because the Alien intrudes on the body in the truest sense of the word. Infected, cankered body is the body unnatural, passionate, and alien to the man himself. The logical and factual drama of the whole film is concluded in that idea: when the most natural and intimate nature – your body – is a den, nest of death and devastating start. And a person cannot do anything with it. And Another, in that meaning, which Emmanuel Levinas implies by this word, can only kill the man himself with a nasty germ living in him. From his point of view, this will be the highest mercy to let person know that he would not be a source of future death.

In the completion of the third part of "Alien" Ellen Ripley killing herself tries to restore the original nature of man in general (of surrounding people), thinking that the last xenomorph is being

killed with her. In this decision and act her will is free, and this will focus on the protection of nature of other people. Others will not be afraid of infection and stay out of danger. Maximus the Confessor wrote that the man "...is obliged to make a companion to nature... his will, which should not bring anything that doesn't grant the logos of nature ...³⁰".

In the film there are no prayers, no Christian attributes, no religious belief in its form, which St. Maximus the Confessor describes and that a Christian believer has. But Ripley carries out the obligation to restore the nature of man with genuine Christian determination. "Logos's nature" of Ripley, her naturalness are infected, but her free will is else able to make the right decisions. This combination does not possess the original harmony and purity of the primary image of the person yet. There is an attempt to correct something that happened in the middle of the first part of the film, when she unwittingly permitted entry to the ship to an infected person.

Ripley's death and sacrifice were intended to stop all the possible continuation of the "Alien" in the movie form. But this has not happened. In the fourth part Ripley will be resurrected and subsequent continuations will begin to exploit the image of the Alien, his looks, specific movements, monster's birth scheme in the person. All efforts, which have been taken to prevent the ingress of the Alien on Earth in the human world, have gone down the drain. "Terrible things" have ceased to be terrible and have become a common way and technology to rattle nerves. A deep meaning of rebellion, which Ripley carried out in respect of the Alien, has been lost and forgotten in sequels.

* * *

An indirect confirmation of the fact that the Alien of movie "Alien" is diabolically evil, not only and not simply terrible, disgusting, fantastic,

etc. – is the story of J. Cortazar "The Devil's Drool"³¹, namely, is its name.

The story tells of how a casual photographer unwittingly warned teenager's corruption and thus warned a sin. You could say precisely saved his life. The photographer would know about this only when later he blew up the picture in which he photographed that situation of temptation/seduction, which he in the past, as such had not perceived or understood. The multiple watching of the enlarged photo made possible to clarify the past, made the event clear and understandable. In a fantastic way a photographic image after a while presented the reality in the form, which was actual and present. The future has changed the past.

The story is called "The Devil's Drool" by name of cobwebs hanging from the trees in the morning. This web is a way of watching and a symbol of that a person does not see things right as they are. "The Devil's Drool" is a layered metaphor, one of the meanings of which is implied by J. Cortazar falsity of this present as the moment. If the future clarifies the past, then, the things and events take place in eternity, not in time intervals of the past-present-future. Diabolical thus is temporary, untrue, situational.

The Devil's Drool is that lust of the owner of "pit mouth" and "black tongue"³², the man from whom the boy was saved by the adventitious presence of carefree photographer Michel at the morning promenade. Here is the description of this man in the story: "What I remember best is the grimace that twisted his mouth askew, it covered his face with wrinkles, changed somewhat both in location and shape because his lips trembled and the grimace went from one side of his mouth to the other as though it were on wheels, independent and involuntary. But the rest stayed fixed, a flour-powdered clown or bloodless man, dull dry skin, eyes deepset, the nostrils black and prominently visible, blacker than the eyebrows or

hair or the black necktie".³³ A truly sinister and dark creature with "black holes" for eyes.

Evil nature of tempting J. Cortazar emphasizes by the description of the boy. The boy ran away from the quay through the "angel's hair – angel spittle"³⁴, the very cobweb, mentioned above. The boy is called by the author of the story "rosy-cheeked cherub", fleeing in his "fragile paradise".

"Drooling devil" or as it is written "drooling delight" in this story avoided contact with humans. And if we revert to "Alien", in the film we see just this very abundance of saliva in its physiological state. Saliva serves as a manifestation of the Alien. His appearance is always shown with current saliva fluid dripping out of toothy mouth. The campaign posters for the movie "Alien" portrayed this creature with sticky mucus. In Cortazar's story Michel- photographer had these spits from a woman, who was the mediator between the boy and a scary pale man. Curses flew as spittle³⁵. Spitting saliva – this is a possible language of temptation and death.

In "Alien" the Alien leaves glue, sticky mucus everywhere. After the appearance of saliva viewers are waiting for the appearance of the Alien. Drooling is a symbol of the Alien, evil, devilish character. In such a sticky web the Alien wraps a man before "fertilize" him with its spider. Heroes of all parts of the film repeatedly stumble upon this sticky mass, as it was stated in the second part of the film – a "product of secretion".

This saliva substitutes a language for the Alien, it is no accident, while seeing its "face" (snout, head, mouth, neb), we always see this. This kind of organic selection highlights just ontological difference between a human and an alien. These droolings, which stick to the hands or face of the person, should cause the viewer's disgust to the Alien in terms of emotional attitude. This aversion caused by contact with something

warm, interior, slimy, and strange is familiar to everyone.

Such non-human language is the language of disgust and surprise; the language as a warning of death, the language of organic emissions in the end allows perceiving the Alien as a conscious being. Yes, the Alien sometimes emits audible sounds, but these sounds are like a loud squeak/screech of an animal. And by these squeaks the Alien is close to the animal world. So It squeaks when dies or when It is hurt. It has already been said, that the first beacon, which was heard by the computer "Mother" at the beginning of the series, broadcast a strange signal decoded both as a signal of danger and as a warning signal. And it is not clear what the nature of this signal and these sounds is, not clear who sent these sounds into space and for what purpose.

But at the end of the first part by the sound of the signal the Alien "talked" with Ripley in her small canoe in which she had slept in the interval between the first and second parts during nearly seventy years. Once again, the most frequent accompaniment of the Alien is neither the squeals and screams, nor the mysterious sound – radio signal, but it was its saliva, sticky like glue drooling, replacing the words, language, and speech. Drooling of direct deadly lust, drooling as a weapon and cobwebs.

Such a sophisticated and truly inhuman language may belong only to the Alien. This language is by its own presence makes the Alien closer to the person, makes the Alien seem as a person with whom you can talk in principle, but its appearance, the outer form of the *untranslatable*, of course, force us to admit that the contact is not possible. And one more note to complete the work, although in a movie about the Alien viewers see a lot of different individuals of the Alien, so many that they can not count, but still, each new Alien is perceived as one and the same Alien, the first

one that came through on “Nostromo” in the first part. This allows us to understand the Alien as a name, not only as an indication of the foreign. All Strangers are united by one name – Alien. This suggests that the Alien has the grounds for a

personality, It has a face, It is every time the same Alien, being one and the same creature with the same face. Although we are aware that there are a lot of aliens. And, nevertheless, they are seen as one.

¹ V.V. Bibikhin . Another beginning. Saint-Petersburg 2003. P. 169

² M.K. Mamrdashvili. Consciousness and Civilization// As I see philosophy. Moscow. 1990. P. 108 – 109.

³ Later films “Alien vs. Predator”, “Aliens vs. Predator: Requiem” are not considered here as being inconsistent with the original intention of the Alien established in the first film by Ridley Scott. After the death of Ripley in the third part, the fourth part of the “Alien” looks artificial in comparison with the first three, and, unfortunately, carries a lightweight tone of irony.

⁴ K. Marx. Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844 // Marx-Engels Collected Works. V. 42. Moscow 1974. pp. 88

⁵ N.V. Pestova. The lyrics of German Expressionism: profiles of strangeness. Yekaterinburg. 2002 When citing the electronic version of the book, pages are given according to the electronic version. Access mode: http://avantgarde.narod.ru/beitraege/ed/np_chuzhd.htm

⁶ Chapter 4 of the second part of the book.

⁷ Chapter 5 of the second part of the book.

⁸ Chapter 3 of the third part of the book.

⁹ N.V. Pestova ...P.257

¹⁰ N.V. PestovaP. 122

¹¹ Yu. S. Stepanov CONSTANTS: Dictionary of Russian culture. Moscow, 2001 P. 126 – 144

¹² Yu. S. Stepanov...P.126

¹³ The author tries to trace the etymology of Russian words чуждии, чужин, стуждин, туждин, шуждии to the key concept of alien.

¹⁴ Highlighted by Yu. S. Stepanov.

¹⁵ Yu. S. Stepanov...P.139-140

¹⁶ El. Levinas. Time and the Other. // Patrology. Philosophy. Hermeneutics. Collection of papers of the Highest Religious and Philosophical Schools. Saint-Petersbourg. 1992. P. 118 – 119

¹⁷ Ripley slept for so long that during this time her own “earth” daughter grew up and died of old age.

¹⁸ E. Levinas...P.119

¹⁹ E. Levinas...P.125

²⁰ E. Levinas ...P.113

²¹ Genesis 3:4

²² Genesis 3:4

²³ Archpriest John Meyendorff. The life and works of St. Gregory Palamas. Introduction to the study. . P. 174

²⁴ Fr (protoiereus) Timothy Butkevich. Evil, its essence and origin. Vol. 1 Kiev, 2007. P. 81 – 82

²⁵ Ibid ...P.83

²⁶ “Ring of Power” is also tempting. Author of “The Lord of the Rings” demonstrates and reveals the slow mechanism of action of this temptation to man. The authors of “Alien”, as already indicated, expedite this mechanism so that the problem and the issue of temptation seem almost invisible.

²⁷ Fr. Thomas Hopko. Fundamentals of Orthodoxy. Minsk. 1991. P. 287

²⁸ St. Maximus the Confessor. Theological and ascetical treatises. Book I. Moscow, 1993. P. 199-200

²⁹ St. Maximus the Confessor ... p. 200

³⁰ Ibid ... p. 200

³¹ Screening this story M. Antonioni in 1967 directed the film “Blow Up”. The original story is called “The Devil’s Drool”, although the thread-cobwebs hanging from the trees in the morning, as it says in the story, in Argentina, the home of the author, are called the “«hairs of angel”.

³² J. Cortazar. The Devil’s Drool// Julio Cortazar. Chaser. Stories. St. Petersburg. 1993. P. 128

³³ J. Cortazar. ... P. 125

³⁴ J. Cortazar. ... P. 124

³⁵ The fact that the drooling is associated with death, Anton Chekhov demonstrated in a funny way, when his character was forced to die of grief from a failed spitting.

Приближение к Чужому

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В статье 2001 года «Ужасные вещи» В.В. Бибихин пишет, что в XX веке «Из-за общего стирания религиозной картины мира ужасные вещи переняли многое из того, что раньше относили к нечистой силе». Соглашаемся и добавляем: массовая культура говорит сегодня об ужасных вещах, показывает их, интересуется ими, вступает с ними в контакт и заигрывает с ними. Многое из того, что сегодня печатается, публикуется и выходит как кинопродукция – в принципе не должно выноситься на широкий экран, в читательскую или какую-либо иную аудиторию. Случается и другое, когда внешне легковесное или коммерческое произведение в глубине своей оказывается несущим тот самый «трансцендентный» и религиозный смысл, о котором пишет В.В. Бибихин.

О религиозном говорится словами и языком мирского, популярного и казалось бы – внешне совершенно от религии далёкого. Такое происходит и без ведома автора, согласно тому, что в мире всё устроено по некоторым устойчивым связям и правилам. Ужасное не перестало быть ужасным от того, что о нём так много сказано и от того, что его облачили в современную ироническую и разноцветную одежду. Чужое, чуждое, чужеродное – не перестают быть таковыми на фоне толерантности, терпимости, либерального всепонимания и мультикультурности.

В данной статье осуществляется попытка отнестись к Чужому без соотнесённости со Своим, к Чужому как абсолютно и полностью Иному в отношении человека.

Ключевые слова: чужой, отчуждение, Другой, понимание, ужасный, спасение, киноэпопея, лейтенант Рипли.
